

point 3
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■ special issue:

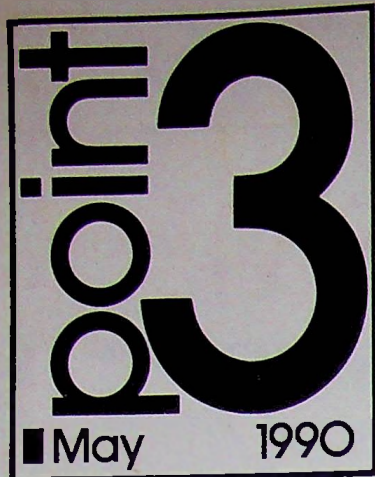
HINDUISM



The magazine of



price 30p



The magazine of **TOC H**

Toc H is a movement of people who seek to build friendships, and offer service, across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is the group - at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood - which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it. Toc H was founded in 1915 by the Rev P. B. 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

All members pledge themselves to try:

1. To welcome all in friendship and lessen by habit of thought, word and deed the prejudices which separate people.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while listening with respect to the views of others.
4. To acknowledge the spiritual nature of man and to test the Christian way by trying it.

This magazine is a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world as well as a record of Toc H service. Its title derives from the third of these Four Points.

Welcome the Stranger

I'm delighted that my brief return to the editorial chair happens to coincide with this special issue on Hinduism (though the material was, of course, prepared by Judith Rice before her departure). As with the earlier issues on Judaism and Islam there will, I suppose, be protests, accusations that we have betrayed the Christian heritage of Toc H. But I don't see a concern for inter-faith dialogue and understanding simply as an optional extra for the liberal-minded. I believe it is an essential part of being true to our own roots in Talbot House, Poperinge, and of being true to the teachings of the Bible. In a recent lecture* Jonathan Sachs, who is to be the new Chief Rabbi, pointed out that in the Old Testament we are told on only one occasion to love our neighbour, to love those who are like ourselves; but we are told to welcome the stranger, those who are different from us, on no less than 37 occasions. And welcoming the stranger has been the task of Toc H from the very beginning.

Jonathan Sachs went on to talk about the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel. 'Just as after Babel there is no single universal language, so there is no single universal culture, no single universal tradition and no single universal faith... A faith is like a language. I can only be at home in my own language. I can only be at home in my own faith. But I am not compromised by the existence of other languages; and to the contrary the more I can speak, the more I can communicate with others and the more I am enriched.'

As we try to understand the language of Hinduism we find aspects of Christianity are highlighted and brought to life in a new way. Let me suggest two ways in which this happens, just to illustrate what I mean. Hindu theology is quite explicitly 'green'. The sense of being intimately linked to the whole created universe is central to Hinduism. We are called to be in harmony not only with all people but with the earth and sky, with the animal and vegetable creation. We have a shared

responsibility for our fragile planet. And understanding this central strand of Hinduism helps us to see more clearly those aspects of the Biblical revelation which point in the same direction. It may help us to develop a more effectively 'green' Christianity.

And then there's the Hindu conviction that God is to be found within us, in the depths of our being, and is therefore to be found in everyone else, those we dislike and distrust as well as those we admire. For Christianity, God is above us, beyond us, beneath us, but he is also within us. Hinduism is a powerful reminder of that aspect of our own Christian faith, of our own attempt to describe the God who is too great to be confined by any of our human attempts to define him (we don't even have an appropriate pronoun by which to refer to her).

The very first book of the Bible makes the staggering claim that we are made in the image of God. 'When human beings create things in a single image,' says Jonathan Sachs, 'they are all alike. God makes humanity in a single image, yet each of them is unique... We are told, and must struggle to see, that the wholly other, he or she who is not in our image, is yet in God's image.' The stranger we are commanded to welcome is made in God's image just as we are.

That's the vision which inspired Talbot House to call itself 'Everyman's Club'. That's why we must, in humility but without compromising our own convictions, seek to understand the great religious traditions, each of which, in its own way, helps men and women to journey towards the God who created them in his own image.

Ken Prideaux-Brune

**Published in Common Ground, the magazine of the Council of Christians and Jews.*

Acting Editor: Ken Prideaux-Brune

Designer: Sybil A. Chick

Cover

A bronze icon of Nataraja from South India. See opposite for fuller description of subject.

Letters, articles and news items are welcomed, and should be addressed to The Editor, Point 3, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H movement.

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Unity of Life

Mathoor Krishnamurti describes the essence of Hinduism.

The richness and colour of Hindu worship is reflected in this shrine in a Hindu temple in Wolverhampton.



Photo: Christians Aware

Hinduism is unique among all the religions of the world in several ways. It is not simply a set of dogmas but a comprehensive, cooperative and revitalising way of life. It does not date back to a particular point of time. It existed long before the 'founded religions' and indeed the very idea that a religion must have a founder is based solely on the fact that Judaism, Christianity and Islam each trace their origins to single individuals and books.

The word *Sindhu*, which means 'river', gave its name to the River Indus, and the Aryan people who had settled in the Indus valley in the second millennium BCE became known to the Persians simply as 'the people beyond the Sindhu'. The 'S' was dropped and the word became *Hindu*. It gradually came to denote this people's distinctive way of life, which was indistinguishable from their religion. Now 'Hindus' live all over the world, but India remains their homeland and nearly 700 million live there.

'religion is realisation; not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories however beautiful they may be.

*It is being and becoming,
not hearing or acknowledging;
it is the whole soul being changed
into what it believes. That is religion'.*

Swami Vivekananda

A Hindu respects all religions, in their pure form. If a man thinks his religion is the best of all, he is to that extent devoid of the true religious spirit. But if he thinks that his path is the best for him in particular, he is both right and wise, for human temperaments are different. Perhaps then the best definition of Hinduism is to be found in the words of Swami Vivekananda, the

The dancing form of Shiva as Nataraja, writes Swami Siva Nandhi, is the most important of the 25 image-forms of Lord Shiva in the South Indian Saivite tradition. The significance of Shiva's dance is three fold: first, it is the image of his rhythmic play as the source of all movement within the cosmos, which is represented by the arch of flames; secondly, the purpose of his dance is to release the countless souls from the snare of illusion; thirdly, the place of the dance is within the individual heart.

disciple of Ramakrishna who was largely responsible for bringing Hinduism to the West at the end of the last century.

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this by work or worship or philosophy or psychic control - by one or more of these - and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, dogmas, rituals, books, temples, shrines are all but secondary details.

The Hindu believes that every individual man, bird or beast and even insect has a place in the scheme of life. The concept of the unity of life is a peculiarity of Hinduism; it envisages salvation not for human beings alone but for all creatures of the world. So why is God given the figure of a man? The answer is that man is the only animal which can think of God and therefore he naturally imagines God in his image. Hinduism says that there is only one God but that he is known by many different names. It is like a man in his house who is addressed as 'husband' by his wife, 'father' by his children and 'brother' by his siblings. It is only the names that are given to the One and Only One that are various.

'the spiritual gain of a person depends on his mental condition and thought life.

It results from his heart, and not from any of his external actions'.

Sri Ramakrishna

It is the belief of Hindus that man, by his true nature, is divine. But he has not tried to understand himself and makes no effort to eliminate the ignorance that has crowded his intellect; so he has not been able to free himself from the shackles that bind him to this world like lust, anger, greed, and hatred. The more he is influenced by these qualities the tighter the bondage becomes. It is therefore the *dharma* (duty) of man to strive eternally to find the divinity within himself and thus attain happiness for himself and to spread happiness all around.

This word *dharma* is very difficult to translate since it is used in a variety of different senses. It can mean religion, right conduct, duty, quality, law, justice and moral order. It comes from a Sanskrit root meaning to

Continued overleaf 3

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hold/exist/support - so anything which sustains or upholds the true nature of a thing is *dharma*. This will vary from object to object and being to being. To burn is the *dharma* of fire; the *dharma* of a mountain is to be stationary. The *dharma* of a tiger is to kill and eat its prey and that of a cow is to give milk. The duties of a king will be different from the duties of a woman. Because Hinduism tells everyone to worship according to his own *dharma*, in this sense faith, it allows great freedom in matters of faith and worship - behaviour is more important than belief.

The ultimate aim of the Hindu is to reach liberation or salvation (*moksha*) - that is, to attain union with God. In order to do this a man must free himself from the chain of births and deaths. The doctrine of reincarnation is based on the law of cause and effect. Our present thoughts and actions encourage certain tendencies in our inner person and these influence our future. All actions taken during our lives (our *kharma*) have their effects. The balance of good and bad in our actions will effect how we are born in our next life - whether as a human being or not, and if as a human being, with what status.

This brief introduction to this most ancient and ever young religion - Mother of all religions - can be summed up in a few words of Mahatma Gandhi, whose life exemplified that of a true Hindu. He was a firm believer in *Satva Dharma Samanatva* - equal respect for all religions. He says: 'I find Hinduism to be the most tolerant of all religions known to me. Its freedom makes a forcible appeal. It is not an exclusive religion. It enables the followers of other religions to follow their own. It asks a Christian to become a better Christian, a Muslim a better Muslim, a Jew a better Jew. It asks followers of every religion to respect fellow men of every other religion. It encourages Hindus to admire and assimilate whatever may be good in other religions'.

Mathoor Krishnamurti is the Director of the Bhavan Centre, London.



Celebrating at the opening of a new Hindu temple in London.

See p.8-9 for a glossary of key terms used in Hinduism.

For books on Hinduism and also on Indian culture, please write to:
The Bhavan Centre, 4A Castletown Rd,
London W14 9HQ; tel. 071 381 3086.

1915 to know Toc H one 1990 another

Tom Gulliver writes this month's article in our series which looks at ways in which Toc H has enabled people to meet who otherwise would not.

A Wider Ecumenism

'To conquer hate would be to end the strife of all the ages, but for men to know one another is not difficult and it is half the battle.'

Those words of Barclay Baron brilliantly summed up all that Toc H stood for. They spoke of reconciliation through the simple expedient of enabling people to meet at the personal, rather than the functional or merely social, level. The movement deliberately set itself the task of bringing together those who believed they had nothing in common, and therefore saw no point in meeting. As they discovered the human reality behind the stereotype, the prejudices began to fall away. That was the context in which friendships were formed.

That pattern of growth in understanding leading to friendship, which I first experienced in Toc H, has been repeated many times in interfaith encounters. My experience of meeting and learning from people of a different faith has been deeply enriching. I have learned that the aspiration described by Barclay Baron is shared by people of all faiths. The longing for peace and reconciliation is deep within each one of us, and is expressed as we reach out for contact with other people, for wholeness within ourselves, and ultimately for reconciliation with God. The Toc H way of friendship is a way of reconciliation, and needs to be demonstrated in an interfaith context.

At various times attempts have been made to introduce Toc H members to the reality of the multifaith society in which we now live. The articles in *Point 3*, and more recently the in-depth treatment of particular religions, have been important contributions to understanding the beliefs and practices of another faith. Weekends at Cuddesdon House and Alison House provided opportunities for face to face meetings with people of different faiths in a friendly Toc H atmosphere. I know from comments subsequently made that our guests appreciated the experience as much as we in Toc H. The good will engendered by such encounters needs to be built upon.

The way friendship has developed between the most unlikely people brought together through Toc H is

legendary. Toc H members can be the most open-hearted and welcoming of people. I have no doubt that the barriers of ethnic origin, different cultures and religions would melt away in the warmth of Toc H friendship. Yet some members seem afraid to put it to the test.

From comments made in letters to *Point 3*, there seems to be a fear that if Toc H entered into some kind of dialogue with people of another faith it would be in danger of losing its Christian identity. It is not a fear I share. My experience of interfaith dialogue has deepened and strengthened my faith as a Christian.

It is important to look at the nature of Toc H's Christian identity. The Toc H experience is based upon an understanding of the Gospels which finds expression in action for one's neighbour and upon the invitation 'come and see'. Toc H has never imposed a credal test, and has welcomed into membership many who were attracted by what they found, but who were unable to describe themselves as Christian. In other words, the basis unquestionably is Christian, but there has never been a demand for an individual member to accept that label. The Toc H attitude has been very similar to what a modern Christian theologian, Raimundo Panikkar, has called 'Christianness'.

In one of his essays Panikkar writes, 'The word "Christian" can be the adjectival content of Christendom (a civilisation), of Christianity (a religion), and of Christianness (a personal religiousness). During the period of the so-called Christian culture of the high Middle Ages, one could hardly be a Christian without belonging to Christendom. Until recently, one could hardly confess oneself to be Christian without belonging to Christianity. Now persons increasingly envisage the possibility of being Christian as a personal attitude without adhering either to Christendom or to Christianity as institutional constructs. I speak here of a personal, not an individualistic, attitude. "Person" always implies community'.

It seems to me that Toc H anticipated Panikkar by several decades. For the movement has always been a community of persons held together by what Panikkar would call their 'Christianness'.

Its religious attitude, unfettered by denominational demands, enabled Toc H, in its early days, to be bold and imaginative in its ecumenical outreach. The



A Muslim, a Christian and a Buddhist at Cuddesdon House during a Toc H weekend.

Copies of our special issues on ISLAM and on JUDAISM are still available, price 40p each including p&p, from Toc H Publications, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

challenge of our present day multifaith society requires from everyone a broader view of ecumenism. This wider ecumenism requires from Toc H an approach as radical as that shown earlier, based upon our own distinctive religious attitude.

That Toc H has a role in bringing people of different faiths together I have no doubt. For instance, I can remember on one occasion Bishop Jim Thompson of Stepney talking about meetings held in his area to discuss the harassment being experienced by the Bangladeshi community. (A situation known quite well to Toc H members working in the same locality.) He said that they discussed all the social and political issues, but what they never seemed to speak about was the contribution that could be made by all those present as people of faith.

This I believe is the sort of situation where Toc H could make a specific contribution. We are people of faith who have discovered through our own experience that differences are opportunities for discovery. Is it not possible for us to invite people from different faiths to meet with us to explore together the religious values that should underpin and be expressed in the life of this country? This would be quite different from a one-off weekend exploring religions. It would be an on-going exercise in building relationships in the areas where we live and work. There is a great deal of suspicion to overcome, and the approach would have to be patient and sensitive. Many of the leaders of the faith communities take the view that our secular society, which they see as 'Christian', is undermining the religious and moral values of their faith, and subverting their young people. We would have to gain their trust, and convince them that we were genuinely interested in understanding their views. There is a great deal of misunderstanding on both sides, and such an exchange could do nothing but good. It may be that out of that would come agreement for action on issues of common concern. It is possible, as I know from my own experience, that, attracted by the genuine friendship experienced, some might want to become more closely identified with us. They would not be many and by then would have become our friends. It would, I think, be right in that situation for the branch or group concerned to consider the request and make a decision. This seems to me a far better way of handling a potentially delicate situation, than to have an arid discussion before the need arises.

The real issue is whether Toc H can adapt to a new situation and live out the claims we make about the nature of Toc H friendship. I know that our movement has the spiritual potential to meet the challenges of the next 25 years, and so play its part in helping to build a civilised society in which the human worth of everyone is acknowledged. I hope it will strive to reach that goal.

■ *Tom Gulliver is a former national vice chairman of Toc H and was on the staff between 1977 and 1982, with a special responsibility for interfaith. Until recently he was General Secretary of the World Congress of Faiths. We gratefully acknowledge his help in preparing our series on the different religious traditions.*

The Swamis and the Entrepreneur

Judith Rice met three very different Hindus, talked to them about their faith.

It was a hot day in August and London was sweating as I took the train to the comfortable little town of Bourne End in Buckinghamshire. Uncertain what I was looking for, I walked through its tidy main street and toiled up a long hill. I began to feel I must have come to the wrong place. It seemed an incongruous setting for a place called the 'Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre'. But there was the notice, large and bold before an old red brick lodge heading a curving drive. No one was around and, still pervaded by a sense of unreality, I wandered uncertainly up to the main house, past an expanse of grounds swathed in summer green.

The Centre was originally inspired by Swami Vivekananda, disciple of the 19th century Indian saint, Sri Ramakrishna. When he came to Britain in 1886 he aroused great interest in the oriental way of life, and a number of people who felt particularly drawn to him set up a group devoted to the study of Eastern philosophy and meditation. By the 1930s they had a resident monk and by the 1960s they were occupying a couple of houses in London. But the capital 'is not a place for spiritual life or spiritual institutions' says Swami Bhavyananda*, who came over to join the centre in 1969; and they moved to their present site, set in its peaceful 10 acres, 13 years ago.

The atmosphere inside is quiet and rather still. Occasionally young men pass silently by, dressed in loose Indian clothes. When they speak they are warm and very courteous. They have come to meditate, to go on retreat, to learn the Hindu way of spirituality: only Swami Bhavyananda himself, the President, is a 'born Hindu'.

His office is much like any other, except that the range of pictures on the wall comes as something of a surprise to the Western eye. Ramakrishna, Jesus, the Virgin Mary, one of the Hindu deities, all are represented: 'Christ and other religious leaders are all incarnations of God', he says. 'We accept Christ but reject Churchianity. God comes at different times to different people'. Wearily,

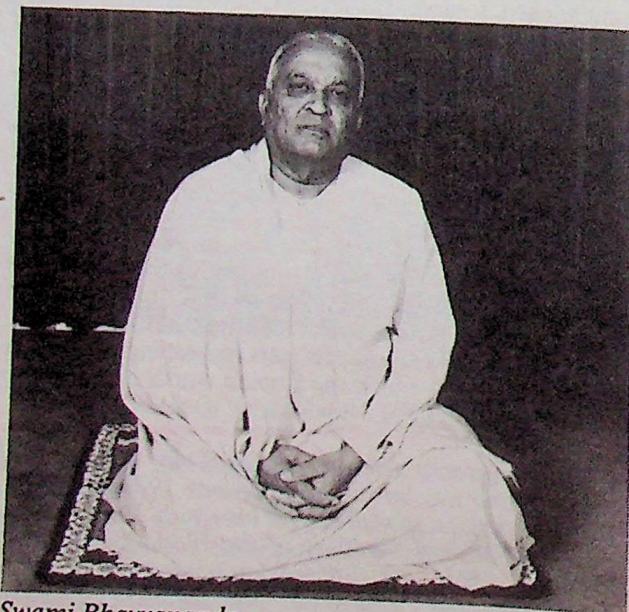


This very English setting provides the sense of peace needed for the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre.

with a certain impatience, he anticipates the usual criticisms: 'Hinduism is not polytheistic. But we need a focus. My focal point is this gentleman with a little beard', (he waves a hand towards the portrait of Ramakrishna sitting cross-legged in prayer, his tranquility edged with eagerness) 'who has defined spiritual life as the main goal'. Because of the authority of his own spiritual life and his experience of finding God, Ramakrishna spoke 'as one with authority', he explains, and through him numerous people were inspired and spiritually renewed.

Swami Bhavyananda argues that all religions in due course become static and that Hinduism has been no exception. Ramakrishna was one of a series of spiritual leaders who have appeared from time to time to revitalise it. The Ramakrishna movement is therefore 'progressive' and he clearly feels a tension both with more orthodox branches of Hinduism and with its more popular piety. 'We emphasise man directly approaching his God through study, the practice of meditation, even ritual, service to the needy - or a combination of them all. Real religion is to meet your creator. The divine is in you already. The purpose of religion is to manifest it. "The Kingdom of God is within you"'. His order's concern is to enable people to seek God, not to convert them to any particular doctrine.

Swami Bhavyananda places great emphasis on the role of education, which 'is the real solution for all problems - even spiritual. With the help of education we broaden our vision. We learn the art of living and also the goal of life. That's what education should be. It is meant to teach self-discipline, so that you can focus your mind on any subject you like'. It's because this great purpose has been trivialised into the learning of facts and the passing of exams that we are 'suffering so much'.



Swami Bhavyananda

Swami Siva Nandhi lives in a terraced house in London. The cramped living-room is adorned with Indian objects and above all with images of Shiva, of whom he is a devotee. After offering coffee and traditional Indian sweets, he wastes no time before launching into a defence of popular Hinduism. 'The temple is fundamental to us. The mind wanders and the ritual helps concentration. Saints don't need these rituals but when we talk about religion we talk about the majority, not the exceptions'. Although he views religion as a spiritual matter, a 'purely personal affair', he argues that even those individuals who choose not to worship should obey all the rules, 'to enable society to function properly'.

He resents the dominance of the Vedantists, who represent only one of several branches of Hinduism but who have won the support of Western scholars: 'Theirs is a liberal Hinduism'. He distinguishes between their monist philosophy, which sees God and the individual human soul as ultimately one; and the dualism of those who are followers of personal gods such as Shiva, Vishnu or Shakti: 'In our case, we keep God on a pedestal all the time. We are always at his feet. God is not identical with the world - he is transcendent *and* immanent'. Not only does he scorn the philosophical snobbery of a school which puts all its emphasis on *jnani yoga* - the need for knowledge and intellectual discrimination to reach enlightenment - and which is therefore out of the reach of ordinary people, he also feels politically patronised by it. 'Shaktism and Shaivism have been downgraded. But not Vishnuism, which is dominant in the north of India. It's a political thing - the centre of power lies in the north'.

The richness of Hinduism is diminished by such divisions. 'Truth is like an uncut diamond. Each individual can only see one facet. No one can ever hope to say he has seen God in all his facets'. Nevertheless, he is not afraid to sum up the essence of his faith in a couple of simple sentences: 'Non-killing is the core of Hinduism' - it's more important even than ritual. And Hinduism in one word is 'thanksgiving'.

§ § §

Swraj Paul is the founder and chairman of Caparo Group Ltd, which includes a variety of successful interests ranging from an industrial company producing welded steel tubes to tea plantations in India. He's done well since he came to this country in 1966, after being brought up in the small Punjab town of Jullundur and educated at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

But when he arrived, things weren't so good. He had brought over his young daughter to be treated for leukaemia; but it was too late and she died. Paul was devastated. His reaction was to stay in the country where she had died but to 'quit worldly life altogether'. For one and a half years he read philosophy and meditated but he found it hard to pass the days - 'there was no solace'. In 1969, he finally decided to start again. He realised that he needed to get on with some work and to take up fresh challenges and with renewed energy he set about this task - since when, 'God has been kind'. The period of 'time out' had been a necessity, and in India it is not an uncommon thing to do. It is called *sanyas*. Without it, he would never have been able to start again.

* *Swami* was originally a general title of respect; it is now used specifically of Hindu monks.

Paul had always been religious and he says he owes his confidence and enthusiasm to this. But his understanding of the meaning of 'religion' is very broad: 'Other religions have tried to differentiate between what is religion and what is not. But Hinduism is a way of life. It's your whole life - it's your relationship with your friends, your wife, your family. Every time I have a relationship I examine it to see if it is good - it puts a lot of discipline on you'. He has no *guru* but he does go to see people if he needs to talk and he reads 'anything - Bertrand Russell, Jewish writing...'. He only 'pops into temples' occasionally - but he celebrates almost all the Hindu festivals with his family at home and the *puja* (the domestic shrine), with its little fire, symbol of purity, is of great importance to him.

His son and daughter have kept to much of their Hindu way of life but he is glad that they have also learned a great deal from their western education. He sent them to Harrow and Roedean respectively and was more than happy for them to attend church while they were at school. If there is one thing Hinduism can teach the west, he believes, it is tolerance. 'If you can be patient with people, and understanding, then you can achieve a lot. It's easier to find fault than to appreciate the other one's point of view. You should look at the good things, not the bad. Our *instinct* is to be intolerant unless somebody is constantly reminding us that it is better to be tolerant'.

But sadly, even Hinduism is fast losing this quality. He attributes this in part to the diminishing amount of time that parents are spending today in passing on the traditions and teachings of the faith to their children. As a result, the wrong aspects of Hinduism are seized on when people feel some need to return to their roots or explore their spirituality: 'every time there's a revival of temple-going and such things I think "what we need now is a revival of an attempt to be more truly human"'.

Swraj Paul smiles gently, puts his fingertips together and leans back in his chair. His office, prosperous and air-conditioned, is part of a large property owned by the Caparo Group in one of the more expensive parts of London. He's a self-made man, an engineer, an entrepreneur. He's also a man of great faith who never fails to say his morning prayers and who is constantly looking within himself: 'Anyone can strive to be good - everybody's aim should be to reach perfection'.



Swraj Paul

HINDUISM

A brief explanation of some of the key terms used in Hinduism. Compiled by Judith Rice.

OM

According to the *Bhagavad Gita* (see opposite) the Sanskrit word *Aum* is the best name for God and must be used regularly. The word and symbol are made up of the three basic sounds A U M. The word is used in prayer, to concentrate and unify the mind, will and emotions.

Dharma

A word which is hard to translate into English, since it has many meanings, including eternal order, righteousness, religion, law and duty.

Samsara

The cycle of birth and rebirth.

Karma

The doctrine that every action produces its own inevitable result. The cumulative effect of one's *karma* (duties and actions) decide the status with which one is born in one's next life.

Moksha

Liberation or Salvation - final escape from the eternal cycle of rebirth.

Brahman

The Absolute - the Ultimate Reality. Brahman is impersonal and beyond this world.

Atman

The individual's true or deeper self. It is identical with a Universal Atman, which in turn is Brahman itself.

Yoga

The word comes from a root meaning 'to yoke' and means the discipline used to bring one's life in order, to attain union with God. The *Bhagavad Gita* describes three yogas: - the way of knowledge (*jnani yoga*), the way of action (*karma yoga*) and the way of love, of devotion to a personal god (*bhakti yoga*).



OM - the Sanskrit representation of the name of God.

Caste

Each Hindu is born into one of four classes (*varni*): - the *Brahmins*, the teacher-priests, devoted to intellectual and spiritual activities; the *Kshatriya*, the rulers, who protect the territory and maintain law and order; the *Vaishyas*, the merchants, who deal with agricultural and economic matters; the *Shudra*, labourers, who do the menial tasks and serve the other three. Each person therefore has a particular place in society and is expected to perform the duties (*dharma*) associated with it.

As well as the *varni*, there are innumerable castes (*jati*). The caste system is now outlawed, however, by the Indian constitution.

According to the *Bhagavad Gita*, class is based on psychological characteristics and not on birth - ie each person is suited to a different way of life.

Festivals

There are a number of Hindu festivals, some of which are celebrated regionally and some nationally. The dates vary year to year since they are based on a lunar calendar.

HOLI (March - April) is the most popular festival. It is an outdoor occasion to welcome the coming of spring, although in Britain it is often observed towards the end of February. It is a time of bonfires and lively rejoicing - one custom is for children to fill buckets with coloured water and use bicycle pumps to squirt anybody and everybody!

DIWALI The name means 'row of lights': homes, temples and other buildings are decorated with small lamps or coloured light bulbs. There are also firework displays and lots of sweets at this time. It is partly a New Year festival - houses are spring cleaned, new clothes are worn and businessmen try to settle accounts.

The Scriptures

The *Vedas* were composed long before writing was introduced into India. The most important is the *Rig* (Royal) *Veda*, a collection of hymns composed by the Aryans, who conquered Northern India during the second millennium BCE.

The fourth and final section of the *Vedas* consists of the *Upanishads*, also known as the *Vedanta* ('the end of the *Veda*'). These are in the form of questions and answers between the *Guru* (teacher) and his pupils. The word *upanishad* means 'sitting down around' and refers to the sitting of the seekers near their gurus to receive guidance. They were written down between about 500 and 200 BCE. It is in the *Upanishads* that the doctrines of *brahman* and *atman* are worked out.

Epics: The *Mahabharata* is the world's longest poem, and has over 100,000 verses. It is about a power struggle between two royal families, both descended from King Bharata. One side represents the forces of good, the other the forces of evil. The *Bhagavad Gita* is part of this epic. It is a dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and his charioteer Krishna in the battlefield. But eventually Arjuna realises that Krishna is God, who has taken human form in order to teach him the truth. Arjuna is filled with grief and loathing at the thought of killing friends and relatives in the battle but Krishna tells him that as a member of the *Kshatriya* class his duty is to fight. He must not be concerned with the consequences: although he may kill people's bodies, their souls are immortal. He calls for Arjuna's love and devotion to him.

The *Ramayana* is another epic, which was composed about 500 years after the *Mahabharata*. It is another tale of good and evil and presents ideals of male courage and righteousness and of female virtue.

Symbols and Images

There are millions of 'gods' in Hinduism - but they are seen as manifestations of the many aspects of the one Truth, *Brahman*. Images - pictures and statues and so on - are used to represent God and as an aid in worship.

Lord Ganesha is the remover of obstacles and the bestower of good fortune. He has the body of an elephant and his vehicle is a mouse - which symbolises the fact that he is master of all creatures.

Vishnu is a benevolent god who is concerned for the world. At various moments in history, at times of moral decline and crisis, he has descended in various forms to restore righteousness. There are 10 of these descents (*avatars*) - the most important were as Krishna and as Rama.

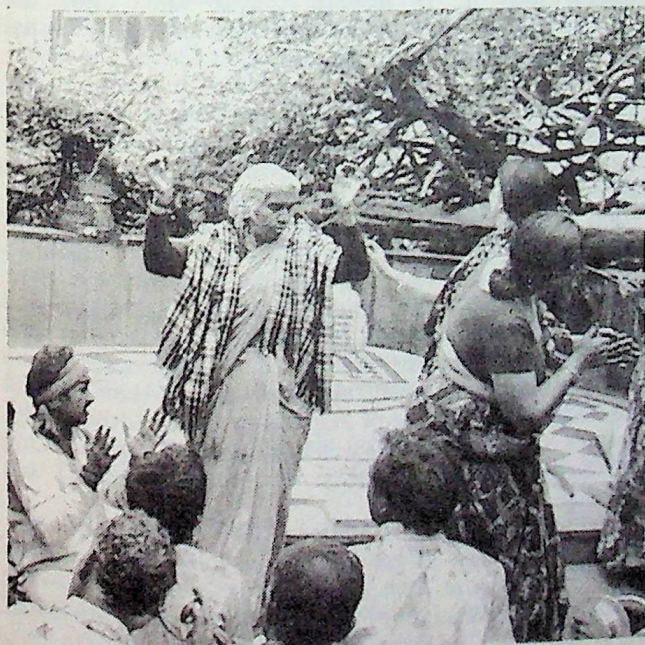


Vishnu as Krishna.

Shiva can be a loving god as well as The Destroyer. He is also the Lord of the Dance, an image of the energy behind all natural phenomena, the sense of rhythm in all movement in the Cosmos.

Durga is a Mother Goddess, the wife of Shiva. She is called **Parvati** in her benevolent aspect, and there are other names and forms as well. Her followers believe she is the benevolent energy, **Shakti**, of the remote, inaccessible Shiva.

Temples are traditionally the homes of a god and going to them is like visiting a friend's house. It is not necessary to give worship in a temple. Most Hindu homes have a small shrine called a *puja*.



Celebrating Holi.

A Better Hindu

Satish Visavadia, Toc H member and former Long Term Volunteer, believes that Toc H made him a better Hindu. He told Ken Prideaux-Brune why.

Toc H, says Satish Visavadia, a youth and community worker in his late 20's, made him, for the first time, proud of his Asian culture. It helped him to discover his identity as a black Briton. It made him a better Hindu.

Satish met Toc H through his sister, who is physically handicapped and was then, in 1978, at a special school. He was invited to a disco for pupils from her school, run by a group of young people who called themselves the Impact Group of Toc H. 'There for the first time I saw fellowship between black and white. It was the first time I'd come across a mixed group, male and female. It was really good. One evening with the group had given me so much I thought I'd like to get involved.' The friendships he made in that group have lasted. 'Only two days ago I had a telephone call. She said: "I'm ringing you because I'm really missing you." That fellowship is still there. She's in London now. It's 10 years on but our feelings towards these people are still the same. They're just as strong. These things will be with us all our lives. They led us to areas of ourselves we didn't know existed.'

It was an experience which lasted a little under four years; but it completely changed the course of his life. It was partly that he'd always felt himself subject to authority, whether at school or at work. There had always been somebody to tell him what to do. 'Suddenly, for the first time, I was able to make decisions that affected my own life. Nobody else controlled it.' And then, as he got more deeply involved with this group of young people, of different races, different religious traditions, different cultures, he found paradoxically that he was getting in touch with his own culture and his own faith. He was going through 'a very rebellious stage', rejecting everything in his own background. It was apparently insignificant things which began a process of change. 'People were saying: "You're a Hindu". And I thought: "Well, am I?" People said, you know, "We love your curries". I always wanted to say: "I hate them, don't mention them". But for the first time I was seeing the positive side of my identity. I haven't looked back since. I have been much stronger in my own faith.'

His faith is stronger because he hasn't meekly accepted beliefs handed down by his elders; he has discovered for himself the things that are important to him. Toc H encouraged his naturally questioning attitude but it is not an attitude that makes him popular in the Hindu community. 'You're not supposed to question, they get very upset about it. Even when my mum is talking about the *Ramayana*, the Hindu epic - and I believe all that - I say: "This is drama. What is the fact, what really happened?" And she'll say: "Here's the book." And I say: "Well, who wrote the book? How did he know?" And she'll say: "Ah, you're not supposed to say that."

The Toc H group was important, not just to Satish but to the whole family. All four brothers belonged. 'It was only there that we got together. For the first time we were sitting and talking about things that concerned us. We couldn't do that at home. It was only Toc H that brought us together.'

He is convinced that Toc H can do for many other young people what it has done for him. And he sees an increasing need for Toc H in a society which seems to be more than ever divided. There is 'a strong lobby from various religions to have their own schools, almost their own communities'.

*through ignorance a common man
considers his own religion to be the best
and makes much useless clamour;
but when his mind is illuminated by true
Knowledge, all sectarian quarrels disappear'.*

Sri Ramakrishna

But if Toc H is going to respond to the new challenges and opportunities it must, he believes, market itself much more effectively. There are, after all, a lot of organisations competing for the same volunteers. And it must have a clear and comprehensible policy. 'We're in a climate where those who know what they're about are going to be successful. What's Toc H policy on apartheid, for instance. We don't say, we believe in breaking down barriers and therefore we must work to end apartheid. Toc H is probably doing it, but it needs to say, we don't believe in it, we want to break it down.'

The greatest obstacle, for young people like him, is that Toc H is perceived as being only for white Christians. The religious aspect for him is not about Christian values (many of which, he believes, are Hindu values too). It's about people finding themselves, where they are in life, and that's 'a challenge that continues until the day you die'. So, he's not asking for religion to be watered down. Indeed it has often seemed to him that people in Toc H are too apologetic about Christian observances. 'Christianity comes into it almost by guilt. People say: "Because it's a Christian movement we've got to do this". But I was there by choice, I wasn't forced into it. If instead they'd said, "For me Christianity is about this, that and the other", that would have been helpful for me.'

He retains a strong personal commitment to offering others the opportunities through Toc H that he has had. In the autumn of 1988 he took a group of Asian girls from Small Heath, Birmingham, where he was then working, to the birthplace of Toc H in Poperinge, Belgium. (See *Point 3*, July 1989.) The girls, like Satish himself a few years earlier, became more aware of their own culture by moving outside it. 'Two of the girls had completely rejected their Asian origin. For the first time they were proud to be Asian.' They performed a dance one evening, to demonstrate something of their cultural heritage to the people of Poperinge. 'They turned up in masses, the whole house was buzzing. It was great.' One of the girls said afterwards: 'For the first time I was proud to be what I am'.

■ This interview is an edited extract from *Out of a Hop-Loft*, the new book about Toc H written by Judith Rice and Ken Prideaux-Brune, to be published by Darton, Longman and Todd in June.

The Fisher Panel 8,
Top H Headquarters,
1 Poplar Circle
Windsor, Australia,
Bucks, HP12 6BT

RECONCILIATION

JAG Lawrence
Birmingham

Winnie Nelson
Oxford

emphasis on unselfish service. We are not a church.

Nell Tracey
Llandrindod Wells

Len Elphick
Crawley

Philip Douch
Kingsteignton, Devon

In the northwest of Pakistan with Afghan refugees; in Thailand with Laotian refugees; in Sudan and Tanzania with refugees and famine victims; the Ockenden Venture takes a prominent role in income-generating projects, community work, school building, road construction and vocational

JCB Thomson
Kempford, Glos.
(formerly Overseas Director,
The Ockenden Venture)

EV Cruickshank (Miss)
Watford (w) Branch

Anne C Puddicombe
Brighouse, W Yorks

I was ever so interested to see a picture of Alec Patterson in your February issue. He was an old member of University College, Oxford, where I went for two terms

Continued from previous page

in 1943 before joining the Royal Navy. Early in 1944 he had been on a visit to prisons in West Africa and he heard through someone in the college that I was to go out to Freetown to join the Coastal Forces base there. He invited me to meet him at a London club before I went, and provided me with an introduction to an African doctor in Freetown, who gave me kind hospitality during my time there. While we were talking over coffee in the club we were joined briefly by a college contemporary of Patterson, one Clement Attlee, then Lord Privy Seal in the wartime government.

It was a curious little event in the life of an obscure 19 year old, and the trouble he took seems to have been typical of the kindness of the man, especially towards young people.

The Revd TF Shirley
*Vicar of St Ethelreda's with
St Clement's, Fulham*

THE WINDSORS IN PARIS

Among the heroes and giants who played their part in the formation and growth of Toc H in the 20s and 30s was the Prince of Wales - as charismatic and popular as 'Tubby' Clayton, who recruited him to be our Patron. And he was no mere figurehead, although he was that too, and supremely - every newspaper carried the evocative picture of the youthful prince lighting the new Lamps at the 21st birthday Festival at the Albert Hall. He was always ready to respond to

Tubby's calls for help, on matters great and small, as many stories testify. Then came the blow which culminated in the Abdication. After the war he and his wife, now the Duke and Duchess of Windsor, lived their lives abroad. Nevertheless many people, and many in Toc H particularly, continued to hold the former Prince of Wales and Patron of Toc H in honour and affection.

Now their beautiful house near Paris has been restored and refurbished with their own belongings and can be visited, if an invitation is sought from the present owners. For all the above reasons I, for one, would like to visit it. Would anyone else like to join me? We could perhaps arrange to meet the Paris branch of Toc H. We could also visit Talbot House and meet Belgian members. But all this could be discussed with those who are interested in a trip - probably in the autumn. Please write to me if you are interested.

Rudolph Loewy
*50 Edinburgh Gardens
Windsor, Berks SL4 2AW*

DEADLINE

All letters and news items for the July edition of *Point 3* should reach the editorial office no later than 18 May. Please send them to:
**The Editor, Point 3,
Toc H Headquarters,
1 Forest Close, Wendover,
Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT**

book review

Pilgrims Together

*MANY MANSIONS - A Christian's
Encounter with Other Faiths*
by Harvey Cox

Collins, £10.95

Real dialogue takes place between individuals rather than between institutions and the strength of this book is that Harvey Cox takes as his starting point his own meetings with other faith communities. But that's the book's weakness too. It leads him to include a chapter on his meetings with Russian Christians which, though fascinating in itself, seems to belong to a different book.

Harvey Cox is a theologian. About halfway through the book he abandons the personal, simply written accounts of individual encounters and his initial reflections on them and he turns instead to consider how he thinks Christian theology will develop in the future. This is not quite what the introduction leads one to expect and the writing becomes dry, abstract and too full of jargon. Yet he has some important points to make.

Too often religion is fenced off from the real world. We talk about the 'religious dimension' as though it was an entirely separate compartment of life. But the great contribution of Jesus to religion, it has been said, is that he did away with it. The faith which he proclaimed is rooted in our ordinary experience. It is expressed, as the 'liberation theology' of Latin America reminds us, in the struggle for peace and justice. It calls us to try to live up to our full potential as human beings.

Inter-faith dialogue sometimes seems to be little more than a hobby for academics; but religious conflicts still threaten the destruction of our planet. All religions proclaim peace but if real peace is to come we have to start by getting to know each other as individuals. We have to recognise each other as fellow pilgrims and start to explore together what it means to be fully human. 'We cannot' writes Harvey Cox 'allow denominations, hierarchies, and confessional strife, to continue to run their course as though what happened in the "sacred realm" lay outside our human capacity to mould and steer'.

Ken Prideaux-Brune

OUT OF A HOP LOFT

Seventy-five years of TOC H

by **Judith Rice and
Kenneth Prideaux-Brune**

With a Foreword by Her
Majesty Queen Elizabeth the
Queen Mother

Published in June
by Darton Longman & Todd

This new book charts the movement's history from its beginnings in Talbot House, Poperinge, and in the old hop loft which became a chapel. The story is told through the personal journeys made by some of the people whose lives have been profoundly affected by Toc H.

Price: £6.95

Copies can be ordered from:
**Toc H Publications,
1 Forest Close, Wendover,
Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.**
Please add 75p per copy for
post and packing.

Poperinge

A Craftsman's Gift

In the chapel at Talbot House is a Cross made during the Second World War by a REME private, Arthur Wright. Arthur saw the Cross for the first time since the war when he visited Talbot House last November. He told Sheila Peaper how he came to make it.

The REME unit of which I was a member arrived at the village of Lot in Belgium a few days after Christmas in 1944. We set up our workshop in a small engineering works near the railway station. Quite a number of the local people came to work with us. They were very good to us and took us into their homes.

We took over an old house near the factory entrance. There we could read, write letters home, make a cup of tea or just sit down and go to sleep. One day the CO sent for me. I was shaking in case I was in trouble. The area padre was with him. He

had taken over the upstairs rooms as a chapel and quiet room. Unknown to me he had seen some ornamental work which I had done in the workshops in London and he asked me if I would make a Cross for the chapel.

All I had to work with were pieces of scrap brass taken from tanks and guns. When I was an apprentice my father had taught me this kind of work. It took me three weeks of my off-duty time, but I enjoyed making it. When it was finished the padre held a service and insisted that I place it on the altar. We sang some hymns. Then a man started to sing by himself 'Nearer My God to Thee'. He was a Londoner but we called him Russki, because his name was Moscovitch. He had a beautiful deep bass voice. I'm sure I would know it if I heard it again.

The chapel was used many times by men of different nationalities and religions. I feel content in the thought that my work brought comfort to so many men. After a time we had to move on and we knew that our unit was to be broken up. The padre suggested the Cross

1990 Tiles

Specially commissioned tiles to commemorate 75 years of Toc H are offered for sale by Poperinge branch. They carry the symbol of Toc H and the coat of arms of Poperinge on a white background and cost £2.25. They can be ordered through Toc H Publications, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks. HP22 6BT.

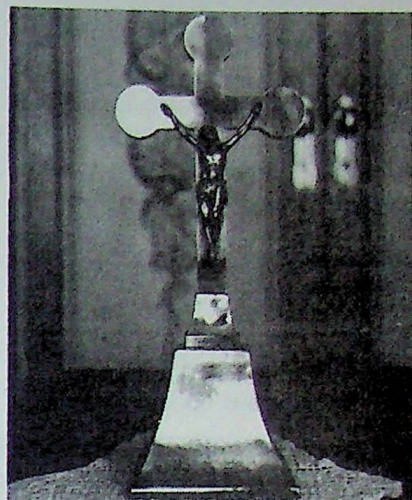


Photo: Ben Hill

Arthur's Cross made in a REME workshop, now in Talbot House.

be sent to Talbot House in Poperinge, and I polished it for the last time. I am very grateful to all the people who have looked after it since.

New Zealand

We're still needed here

Philip Liner

Toc H has never been one for shouting from the rooftops - and I reckon that's one reason why membership fell so dramatically after the war. But Toc H New Zealand is 65 years old this year and that prompts this little rooftop shout from down under.

There are still people here today who remember the early days but after the war numbers declined and branches went into recess (a polite way of saying they folded!). Even the efforts of a dynamic staff man from Britain, Jack Davies, couldn't whip us into enthusiastic rebirth. Main trouble here was distance and terrain. Have a look at your atlas - New Zealand's long and thin and mountainous, and in those days roads weren't all they might be. Jack did a mighty job though, and is

still doing it in retirement. He and his wife Betty are still active in Wellington Branch.

There have been times when I as Honorary Commissioner have felt that I would be the one to sign the death warrant of Toc H New Zealand. When my wife Jean and I came here in 1968, after 20 years of membership in England, we found two struggling branches in Wellington, one made up of men, the other of women. An old story, but one which was resolved sensibly and happily here by amalgamation. Now we have 25 members, including several husband and wife teams, as a positive indication that joint branches are the answer. That happened, too, in Auckland, Nelson, Christchurch, Waimati and Dunedin, and a movement which 22 years ago I said would be dead in five years is still with us. OK, so we're not really growing, and of course we're all getting that much older, but jobs are still being achieved by all the branches. Those jobs may have changed with changing circumstances. We don't now do the more physical things

which typified my early days as a young man in Toc H. But there are things that can be done by us oldies. For instance in Wellington one member alone has knitted 1,000 knee rugs for hospital patients. We have put on 150 concerts for elderly blind folk over 14 years. Comforts are provided for patients in a huge hospital in Levin. Similar stories are told by other branches here.

As the old song has it: 'The Times They Are a'Changing'; and Toc H has changed with them in New Zealand. As someone once said, 'If Toc H hadn't been invented in 1915, we'd have to think about inventing it now'. Despite the gloom and despondency we hear around us about the strength and the direction of the movement there is a real need for what Toc H stands for. In days of economic and racial and family instability, here and elsewhere, there's a need for a calming link. And that link could be your branch of Toc H.

■ Philip Liner is Honorary Commissioner of Toc H New Zealand.

round

Parliament of Religions

by Marcus Braybrooke

Nearly 100 years ago, people of many religions came together in the hope that religions would 'no longer make war on each other, but on the giant evils that afflict humankind'. They met in Chicago, USA, in 1893, for the World Parliament of Religions. They discovered that they could be loyal to their own beliefs, whilst appreciative of the beliefs of others.

Since then many local interfaith groups and some national bodies for interreligious cooperation have

come into being. Four main organisations, The International Association for Religious Freedom, the Temple of Understanding, the World Congress of Faiths and the World Conference on Religion and Peace, seek to link interfaith cooperation worldwide. Their members hope to share in common celebration in India in August 1993 and will take part in other events being planned around the world.

We encourage you to share in celebrating 100 years of the interfaith movement and to start planning now. We hope that all places of worship will arrange special celebrations and that schools and youth organisations will plan educational programmes so that 1993 becomes a real Year of Interreligious Understanding and Cooperation.

■ *The Revd Marcus Braybrooke chairs the World Congress of Faiths International Committee.*

points

▼ Troon Methodist Church was the setting for the 49th birthday and rededication service of the **Troon men's Branch**, which was supported by the women's branch. Following the service the new meeting room was officially unlocked by founder member Mr J B Scantlebury.

▼ **Elmstead Market Branch** ended the old year by winning the cup for the best dressed stall at a local bazaar - all proceeds went towards repair work at the community centre. Members have also enjoyed spending time with residents at Hamilton Lodge and Beaumont Hall, Clacton.

▼ As part of their planned programme of events to mark the 75 years of Toc H members of **Wrexham Branch** and their friends were the guests of the Mayor and Mayoress in the Guildhall, writes *Wyn Roberts*. Guest speaker was the Revd Alan Johnson, the National Chaplain, who gave a wide-ranging and inspirational talk. Guests included senior students from local schools. Also present was Sir William Gladstone, who is a President of Toc H, the Lord Lieutenant of Clwyd, and a former Chief Scout. As the next phase in the celebrations the Branch is planning a festival concert.

▼ **Nailsea (m)**, Avon, presented a portable, rechargeable cautery to a local health centre in memory of former Branch pilot, Fred Howard. The women's branch joined in by giving the associated burners in memory of a good friend of the branch and the gifts, together with a suitably inscribed Toc H plaque, were presented in January.

▼ **Parkhurst (w)**, Isle of Wight, ran a charity shop for a week in January and raised over £1,000. Main beneficiary is the local hospital's body scanner appeal - there is at present no scanner on the island.

▼ **Largs Branch**, in Scotland, plan a regular series of 'Question Times'. Local people will be invited to put questions to a panel chaired by branch member and local councillor, Dan Doris. We look forward to hearing more about this experiment in due course.

Fancy dress time for volunteers (and their guests) at one of this year's winter projects, at Cell Barnes Hospital near St Alban's, Herts.



Photo: David Cushing

Intent faces at the children's party held during one of the year's first weekend projects, in Cuffley, Herts. When the volunteers weren't putting face paint on the children they did some decorating at the Youth Centre where the party was held.



update

new members

The following new members were registered during February/March:

Mrs Joan Vanderpol
(Broughton Astley W)
Mrs Elizabeth B Bayley (Central)
Mrs Gladys Downham
(Falmouth J)
Thomas Light (Felpham M)
Alexander McCullough
(Griffithstown M)
Mrs Rita Carr (Guisborough J)
Mrs Mary A Wirth (Hythe J)
Edward W Garner (Kempston J)
Mrs Jean S Davidson (Largs J)
Edward J Woods
(Llanarmon-Y-Ial M)
Kenneth R Mackenzie
(Long Eaton M)
Lt. Col. Graham Parker OBE
(Poperinge J)
Mrs Nola Thompson (Saltford J)
Mrs Joyce Denton
(Tunbridge Wells East J Grp)
Mrs Ruth F Baker (Uxbridge J)
Revd Edward C Curliss
(Winsford J)
Samuel H and Mrs Mary K Brown
(Wolds District)

Welcome to 18 new members

small ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 10p a word (minimum £1) plus VAT, to *Point 3 Magazine*. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

Raise funds quickly, easily. Superb ball-pens, combs, key fobs, diaries, etc. gold stamped to your requirements. Details: Northern Novelties, Bradford BD3 8BT.

Hythe, Kent - homely accommodation in member's home. Bed/breakfast and/or evening meal or full board, very reasonable rates. Enquire Nesta Cock, 7 Tournay Close, Lympne, Hythe, Kent CT21 4LL. Tel: 0303 269407.

For Sale. Everest & Jennings battery "Runaround" in good condition with extras. £675. Ring Redhill 762723.

welcome

Ruth Boyd has joined us as the new Editor of *Point 3* and Publicity Officer. She has eight years experience as a Press Officer under her belt and would very much appreciate feedback about projects and ideas from readers. Ruth intends to travel widely to gain first hand experience of Toc H work in the field and to assess possibilities of obtaining more public awareness about our activities.

Ruth is 40 years old and the mother of two sons, aged 9 and 11. She has worked as a Press Officer with Thomas Cook, as an Information Officer/Press Officer at the Home Office - one of her claims to fame is having visited more of HM prisons than most! - and was Press Officer to the Minister for the Arts. She has also worked as an editor for the Department of Education and Science and as a free-lance editor and writer. She has co-written two books with a Bucks farmer, one of which was published on April 12: *More than Seventy Summers* (Whittet Press) is about the changing countryside.



Ruth Boyd

congratulations

to George Tate who, although a comparative newcomer, becomes Mayor of Much Wenlock, Salop, this month. He and his wife Connie (a former member of the Central Executive Committee) were instrumental in starting Toc H in Much Wenlock.

and to the two couples from Buckingham Branch who celebrated their Golden Weddings on the same day - March 25th. They are Jack and Miriam Holland and Frank and Violet Stanton.

obituaries

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In February

Edna 'Billie' Bainton (Trimley)
Vera J Robins (Cleveland District)
Arnold W Sadler
(North Gloucestershire District)
Ada Sharpe (late of Penn W)
Myfanwy Smith (Penn W)
Betty I Webster
(Sandown/Shanklin)

In March

Donald G Davis (Gloucestershire)
Clarence C Darwent
(Sandown/Shanklin)
Michael J Price (Wulfrun)

Revd Owen Ralph Fulljames was a much loved and respected member of Hayling Island Branch and later of the SE Hants District. He had a distinguished career, having been a minor canon at St Paul's Cathedral, a Royal Naval chaplain, an honorary chaplain to the Bishop of London and an assistant master at Rugby school. He continued to take preaching appointments until a few weeks before his final illness.

JF

It is with deep regret that we record the death of Sadie Bishop in January. A life-long member of Mansfield Branch, she had held various offices and was area treasurer for many years. She later joined Workshop Branch and continued to take a keen interest in their activities even into old age. She always lived her life to the full; she was a good friend - kind, generous, with a wonderful sense of humour.

EC

Norman Barwell died in January in Lewes, Sussex. He and his wife Margaret ran the Toc H 'Blind at Fellowship' for over 30 years. He also held office as chairman and secretary for several years. Imperturbable, ever cheerful and hard-working, Norman was a fine example of Toc H in action. We thank God for his life and work over many years in Ruislip.

AJ

It is with much sadness that we report the death of Janet A L Chambers in January 1990. She will be greatly missed by her Toc H friends. She worked hard for Toc H in her branch and in the Southdown Region and was also a great worker for her church as well as visiting numerous housebound friends. She has left a big gap in our lives.

PC

Irene Fanna, former member of Durrington branch, died in January. Although the branch had to close about 10 years ago, we continued the fellowship in monthly exchange visits to one another's homes.

EM

Green Street Green Branch, Kent, has lost its oldest member with the death of Ivan Taylor, who was one of its mainstays for over 50 years. We celebrated his 90th birthday last year and his attendance was regular until just before Christmas. He was educated at Christ's Hospital and served in the First World War. He became a Chartered Accountant. He served Toc H nationally at the time of the purchase of the headquarters offices on Tower Hill. For a number of years he was financial adviser to the National Playing Fields Association. Locally, he was a member of the Methodist Church for 50 years. He was much involved with the Green Street Green Association. He successfully negotiated the purchase of premises now widely used by various organisations, including Toc H. Through the years Ivan held every branch office and gave much encouragement to the younger members. We shall miss him greatly.

AFB

We give thanks for their lives

Rhine Army Summer Show June 15 - 16 - 17

Each year the Military in Germany present a three day event which is a mixture of displays, stalls, entertainment, fun fair and Service Industry outlets. It is a major event of the year which attracts thousands of Service personnel and other visitors. Toc H attends this show each year and runs a large marquee selling fast foods,

newspapers and containing a Toc H publicity stand. This year we would like to have four volunteers from the UK to work at the Show. We welcome either sex and any age range - from teenagers of 18 onwards to pensioners of 80! Toc H will pay your airfare and provide accommodation at our Paderborn Centre; you will only

need pocket money. Like Toc H Field Staff you will be working hard but there will also be a lot of fun. If you would like to volunteer or require further information, please contact:

**Tony Caldwell, Field Officer,
Headquarters Toc H,
Headquarters CVWW, BFPO 15.
Tel: 01049-5221-80374**

THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FAITHS 1990 PILGRIMAGE

"A JOURNEY IN FAITH"

In 1990, the World Congress of Faiths is organising a pilgrimage from Derby to Iona between June 27 and July 28. The aim of the pilgrimage, which passes through Sheffield, Huddersfield, Bradford, Leeds, Carlisle, Glasgow as well as many other

smaller communities, is to bring together Muslim and Christian, Hindu and Bahai, Sikh, Jew and Buddhist, in an atmosphere of friendly activity.

The pilgrimage will be on foot and by minibus. It is open to anyone who wants to take part for a day or more, of any age and

of any religion. Along the way local religious communities and interfaith groups are arranging events and hospitality.

Minibus drivers urgently needed. Anything you can offer - a day or a week or more - will be greatly appreciated.

More information from:
**World Congress of Faiths,
28 Powis Gardens, London
W11 1JG.**

COME AND JOIN US IN CELEBRATING THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF TOC H

Beds, Bucks & Herts Area Rally

TO BE HELD
IN ST ALBANS ON
SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER 1990

OUTLINE PROGRAMME

2.00PM - 2.45PM
ARRIVAL AND
WELCOME "CUPPA"

3.00PM
"OUT OF A HOP LOFT"
Speakers: Ken Prideaux-Brune
Judith Rice

(This will draw out some of the themes of the book of the same title by Ken and Judith which will be published in June)

4.30PM TEA

5.30PM ENTERTAINMENT

6.30PM SERVICE
Led by the Revd David Monkton

**Inclusive cost per person:
£3.50**

If you would like to receive full details of the programme and ticket application form (when they are published) please complete and return the coupon below to:

**Mrs Deirdre Gray,
District Secretary,
South East and West Herts District,
19 Carlton Court,
Carlton Road,
Harpenden, Herts AL5 4SY**

(NB These details will be sent automatically to all branches in Beds, Bucks, Herts and North London Districts)

Please send me details of the Beds, Bucks and Herts Area Rally

Name: _____

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North East

**NATIONAL GARDEN
FESTIVAL, GATESHEAD -
CELEBRATING 75 YEARS
OF TOC H.**

Members and friends in the North East will be holding a Regional Celebration on July 8th. Everyone welcome. Tickets (£6 full/£4 O.A.P.) for touring the Garden Festival site, attending the Celebration, and enjoying a cup of tea, are available from:

**Audrey Smith,
14 Westfield Ave.,
Redcar, Cleveland TS10 1HG.**

West Midlands & S Wales Region 75th Birthday Celebrations

at Hanbury Hall on 30 June 1990 from 10.45am to 6pm
All members and friends are warmly invited.

Tickets £1 in advance
available from:
**Chris Williams
82 Woden Avenue
Wednesfield
Nr Wolverhampton
Staffs WV11 1PW**